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# CANTO XVII.

OF

# DON JUAN.

BY ONE WHO DESIRES TO BE

## VERY GREAT UNKNOWN;

REMEMBERING THAT

——" in a theatre, the eyes of men,
After a well graced actor leaves the stage,
Are idly bent on him who enters next,
Thinking his prattle to be tedious."

SHAKSPEARE. K. RICH. II.

WITH AN

**ILLUSTRATION BY SEYMOUR.**

LONDON:

JAMES GILBERT, (LATE W. KIDD.)

228, REGENT STREET.

1832.

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# DEDICATED

TO THE

SHADES OF LORD BYRON.

And though he's taken to the *shades below*,
We've plenty of his *shades above* to show.* P. 5. Stan. ii.

---

* See Print shops (Ackermann's, &c.)

"Where every ruin, cloud, and tree makes known a part
Of Shades of Byron and Napoleon Buonaparte."
*Poems by Captain—Somebody or other.*

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# DON JUAN.

## CANTO XVII.

I.

The noble Byron,—whose almighty song,
An Alexander 'mid the hosts of rhyme,
Gain'd easy triumph o'er the numerous throng
Of rival poesy of every clime,
Exacted praise from even Envy's tongue,
And made the Muses once again sublime,—
Has perish'd like mankind, but left a name,
Which Gods might die for, on the heights of Fame!

II.

That lordly spirit, whose vanity was thwarted
By the revilings of the fickle crowd,
Whom he, in *condescension*, only courted
For their "sweet voices," nor would have allow'd
Them judgment but to praise him, is departed,—
I trust, for where his audience makes him proud!
But, though he 's taken to the *shades below*,
We 've plenty of his *shades above* to show.[1]

P23086

III.

And now Parnassus' height, which Byron trod,
With talent's practis'd foot,—who would not
Yet mortals follow up the works of God; [shun?—
And plans, which architects have left undone,
The common bricklayer perfects with his hod;
How often too the veriest fools have won
Reward for what poor genius design'd;
And valets wear what masters leave behind!

IV.

Thus I, a mere disciple, who have caught
At least a little of the poet's vanity,—
Though, for my pains, I, doubtless, shall be thought
To be no little bordering on insanity,—
And though my verse, instead of being bought,
Should be maltreated by the whole Humanity,—
Rather than try my luck upon a new one,
I'll put the finish to the old "DON JUAN."

V.

Oft has the question fully been debated
Whether this epic's moral should be mended:
The pious many have not hesitated
To say the whole of it should be suspended;
Others again, in deference, have created
Morals the author ne'er himself intended;
While even those, who think it will not hurt you,
Admit "Don Juan" *might* possess more virtue.

VI.

It might be wise for novices, to weave
A little looseness in their poetry;
For, what we cannot purchase without leave
We like the more procured on the sly;
Then, every woman "is at heart" an Eve,
And will, of course, for fruits forbidden sigh;
While those who scruple most must first peruse
To learn a reason why they should abuse.

VII.

But Byron,—whose great genius was so strong
That it could force the giddiest to read [wrong
The things which should be, not which are,—was
To mingle so much more than he had need
Of every-day occurrence in his song,[2]—
And that with such blunt truth, without its meed
Of dogma, sentiment, and wholesome cant
To please the grandmamma and maiden aunt!

VIII.

I, for myself, thus early undertake
To be, as much as possible, correct;
And, if, at any moment, I should break
My promise, by compulsion or neglect,
I will some very grave reflection make
At the same time to balance the defect;—
Besides the moral wherewith I'll conclude
Shall make amends for being somewhat rude.

IX.

Without the least intention of offence
'Gainst modesty, or virtue, or theology,
At once my arduous task then I'll commence;—
With, for my rashness, only this apology,
(Which will not puzzle the intelligence
Of any child who knows aught of geology)
That, if the sun sets 'ere our journey 's finish'd,
The chances are we find our light diminish'd.

X.[3]

* * * * * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * * * * *

XI.

Alas! how wrong of poets to begin,
However young they be, such long narrations,
Without ensuring life; lest they should bring
Their heroes into ticklish situations,
And then, perchance, like Byron, cease to sing,
Leaving their readers' own imaginations
To rescue or condemn them, as they please,—
And every one condemns with greater ease!

XII.

How oft are honest creatures thus misjudg'd;—
(That Juan should be perhaps I wonder less)—
For mortal never tempting journey trudg'd,
Where woman's witchery urged him to digress,
But he was ever generously grudg'd
Virtue enough to help him through the mess!
And who to others in these times could grant
That continence which he himself may want?

XIII.

We left our hero frighten'd at the ghost,
Which haunted Norman Abbey, but, in place
Of "the Black Friar," pleas'd to find a most
Substantial, glowing form in his embrace;
A being yet more dangerous than a host
Of spiritual shadows was her grace
Fitz-Fulke, who came disguis'd in monkish dress,—
But for what purpose, reader, you must guess.

XIV.

O'er all that pass'd between them I must draw
A veil,—or rather you might say, the curtain:
For I prescribe myself a sacred law,
Never to publish rumours which might hurt one,
But to state only what I either saw
Or know, on good authority, for certain;—
And, in the present case, I do not credit
The way in which "*the world*" interpreted it.

XV.

Nor can I blame "*the world;*" for I must own
'Twere more than nature could expect, to find
A youth, for gallant offices so known
As was our Juan, who could bring his mind
(When visited by loveliness—alone—
At midnight!) to be morally inclin'd:
But, sometimes on the wildest rocks, the rose,
Where least expected, in luxuriance blows!

XVI.

It were an outrage upon common sense
To say one *did* escape, on such a night,
Who had, like our poor hero, for defence,
So little conscience;—still I hint he *might;*
"Nothing is certain," and, by inference
From all that pass'd, I must believe I'm right
In my conjecture:—but then where's the reason
For Juan's rectitude so out of season?

XVII.

'Twas not "male-chastity;"—that stuff began
And ended too with Joseph, Jacob's son!
And (thanks to Richard Brinsley Sheridan,
Who made another Joseph who had none
But outward show) he 's more than mortal man,
Who, though inclin'd to virtue, dares to shun
The frailties of his nature, or give vent
E'en to an incidental sentiment!

XVIII.

Oh! Richard Brinsley—Richard Brinsley—Oh!
Spite of thy satire, thou art much to blame
For having made thy doubly wicked Joe
So great a libel on an honest name:
For him, alas!—who could brave every woe
And every fortune, Ridicule can tame
To be a slave; and many, to avoid
The nickname "Joseph," hourly are destroy'd!—

XIX.

P'rhaps Juan's apprehension of the ghost,
Gave him a shock which he could not get over;
Or p'rhaps Aurora Raby's image cross'd
His mind, and wouldn't let him be a rover;
Still he himself,—who was too apt to boast
His many triumphs, as a general lover,—
As to Fitz-Fulke, could never be induc'd
To own she was not shamefully traduc'd.

XX.

Now all this mystery never had been made,
Nor all this trouble given me, had not
Another figure come, in black array'd—
On the same errand p'rhaps—to the same spot:
But 'twas no ghost, (or, if so, vilely play'd
As by a mummer who his part forgot)
Although it scar'd away our hero's wits,
And cost the duchess three successive fits.

XXI.

The house was rous'd, and, full of vague alarms,
The inmates hurried to the hall,[4] and found
The Duchess kicking in his Donship's arms,
Which were engag'd in striving to keep round
The full proportion of her grace's charms
Her mantle, which she would kick on the ground,
As if she gloried in a *fit* excuse
For shewing limbs not envy could abuse.

XXII.

She soon recover'd and could but declare
(And Juan swore, of course, to 't, every bit)
That she was stepping—she could not say where—
When she beheld a sable figure flit
Beside her and evaporate in air,—
Which straightway sent her off into a fit;
That Juan came—and didn't even stay—
She blush'd—to get his smallclothes on the way!

XXIII.

Now this was very plausible to tell, [joke,"
And 't might have pass'd with all "a three days'
(Though each had somewhat been an infidel—
And, as for shades and spirits, thought them *smoke*)
Had the black ghost been bound by any spell
To silence or dead language;—but it spoke
The living tongue of woman, and made known
More than itself knew ere the day had flown.

XXIV.

The fury of the storm was doom'd to burst
Fresh on the flower that would feel it most;
For poor Aurora Raby was the first
To whom, in kindness, this imagin'd ghost
Disclos'd her secret, and improv'd the worst
Of her suspicions, to poor Juan's cost.
It was a very wet and dismal morning
And ladies work'd and talk'd instead of yawning.

XXV.

Now ladies' working is no trifling matter;
For, fond as women are of flattery,
They're none of them the least dispos'd to flatter;
And threads and needles leave their tongues quite free
The reputations of all friends to spatter—
Where they're on terms to take a liberty;—
Alas! of fatal engines the most ready
Is, without doubt, the workbox of a lady!

XXVI.

Very long since a woman, nam'd Pandora,
(And if we can believe one Hesiod
No other woman ever liv'd before her)
Came, by command of Jupiter, the God,
To vex mankind, and, for that purpose, bore a
Boxfull of evils; now—'tis very odd—
That box might to the ladies then, I trow,
Have been the same, as is a workbox now!

XXVII.

All are engaged; here two, here three combine
And pin a subject to their work of shame;
Now, soon as snugly seated, they begin,
With hand and tongue alike, to cut and maim;
Perhaps according as their work is fine,
Some choose a noble's, some a gentle's name,—
And Adeline a piece of satin had employ'd her
Some fifteen months already to embroider.

XXVIII.

'Twas fancy work, and Juan pleas'd her fancy:—
He was, in truth, "a very pretty fellow;"
His figure the most conscious elegancy,
His features perfect, his complexion sallow,
(His cheek had somewhat lost the brilliancy
Of boyhood) without being the least yellow;—
And the complexions most becoming men are
A Vandyke brown or tint of burnt Sienna.

XXIX.

Yes, Juan was *her* scandal;—and, in fact,
He was the general victim; for, the scene,
In which he'd been so lately forc'd to act
Such *bootless* part, was of that happy mean
That 's sure chaste woman's notice to attract,—
Though less than modest, yet not quite obscene!
Strange with what goût fair lady will report
And make still fouler matters of this sort!

XXX.

But why did Ad'line single out Miss Raby
To hear her libel Juan? for she thought her
At best a little better than a baby;[5]
But she suspected that his Donship sought her
Affections, and she did not deem it shabby
To baffle such pretensions; and a daughter
Of "Holy Church,"[6] she knew, thought "peccadilloes"
Not ripples in life's current but huge billows.

XXXI.

"I saw," she said, "the Duchess leave her room,—
Silent and histfully, as if for wrong;—
Without a candle to dispel the gloom
Of cloisters haunted, if we trust the song;[7]
And who'll believe her merry grace would roam
For nothing in the dark and cold?—so long!—
Just one hour twenty minutes and a second,
As, by my Lord's Chronometer, I reckon'd!

XXXII.

"In fact, my dear, to put it past a doubt,
I will tell *you*—(Tut! there's a monstrous stitch
'Twill take me half an hour to pick it out!)
Where was I?—yes, my love, I felt an itch
To know what 'twas Fitz-Fulke could be about,—
But, mind, I'm telling you a secret which
I'd tell no soul but you, dear;—not a word
Of it have I ev'n hinted to my lord;

XXXIII.

" For he's so very—(There again I've blunder'd!
This silk's too thick)—he's so ridiculous,
So very odd! he really might have wonder'd
Why I observed her Grace's actions thus;
He might have laugh'd at it; or might have
thunder'd
About his honour, and have made a fuss;—
Besides he must be telling all he hears,
And it might reach through him the Duke's own ears!

XXXIV.

" Well, after listening, as I said before,
A full hour twenty minutes and a second,
Resolv'd to bear such strange suspense no more,
I threw a large black shawl about my neck and
Went forth—to find her at Don Juan's door—
A sight at which I positively sicken'd!
She quite *en deshabille*,—he *en chemise*
*De nuit*, which scarcely reached his naked knees!

XXXV.

" She saw, and, 't may be, took me for "*the friar*,"
And rous'd the house up by her *feint* or fit.
Now I've been taught that no offence is higher
Than violation of the marriage rite;
And, if it be so, we might edify her
Most graceless Grace, by lecturing her a bit.—
How pale you are, my love! such sinful doing—"
" No, madam, I've but prick'd my finger, sewing."

XXXVI.

Now, as Aurora heard all this, her bile
Was in a painful state of effervescence:
She listen'd eagerly, yet, all the while,
Inwardly cursing Adeline's complacence;
And, every moment, she grew fainter, till
At length, with most inimitable presence
Of mind, she gave her hand a gentle prick
And said the sight of blood had turn'd her sick!

XXXVII.

"P'rhaps," artlessly she said, "ere we accuse
The Don decisively we'd better pause"—
"Aurora, you mistake; we can excuse
The handsome Spaniard with sufficient cause,
But not her wicked Grace, who could abuse
The sacred virtue of the marriage laws;—
Oh! no, I blame the wily hand which set,
And not the bird that fell into, the net."

XXXVIII.

"But might he not resist?—you laugh! I grant
It would be ineffectual to search
For reasons to defend a Protestant:
But, when we members of the Holy Church,[8]
In tempting situations, virtue want,
Nor Saint nor Virgin leaves *us* in the lurch:
And it is crime to let the tempter's snares
O'erpower us, albeit unawares!"

XXXIX.

" Psha ! child," cried Adeline, " however good
Or bad, or whether Saint or Infidel,
I'll not believe man ever yet withstood
The artful influence of beauty's spell,—
That is, if made of real flesh and blood ;
The Holy Scriptures certainly do tell
Of one Adonis who'd not quit his duty,—
But sure his tempter had more years than beauty ![9]

XL.

" No one than I, my dear, could be more zealous
In deprecating every sort of vice ;
But I detest your sentimental fellows,
So cold in heart they'll not ev'n melt like ice,—
Who give their wives no reason to be jealous,
They are so very scrupulously nice !
Oh ! I should be Don Juan's worst of foes, if
I but imagin'd he could be a Joseph !"

XLI.

Aurora, shock'd, declared it was inhuman
For any man to proffer love to more
Than to his own, just, lawful, wedded, woman.—
'*Twas* hard, own'd Adeline, since their sex forbore,
(To please " the world" and laws) from having two [men.—
Aurora thought it very sinful ; for,
Though legal, the polyg'my of a Turk,---
Still more concubinage was heinous work !

XLII.

Aurora sat in thought; then turn'd her eye
From Earth, with an expression of despair,
And rais'd it with devotion up on high,
Fearful that virtue rested only there!
Her mournful gaze expanded wistfully;
Her hands were clasp'd, and her lips mov'd in pray'r,
Till for awhile her mortal spirit slept;—
She look'd to Earth again, and woke, and wept!

XLIII.

"Oh, that there were," she sigh'd, "some mortal
Affix'd by bounteous Heaven to redeem [price
Debas'd mankind from their careers of vice!
Would that my life might, in its mercy, seem
A trifling, yet sufficient sacrifice![10]
Or let me, Heaven, quit this rugged dream
Of Earth, and be thy humblest Seraphim,
That I may guard the world, and watch o'er him!"

XLIV.

"O'er *him!*" yes *he* was all the world to her,
And she for him pray'd more, than all the rest
Of poor mankind;—but *whom* did she prefer?
Why surely, gentle reader, you have guess'd;
For in an epic we can scarcely err,—
In every scrape our hero stands confess'd.
Yes, she loved Juan!—But once I began to
Dilate on woman's love—and fill'd a canto!

XLV.

Yet, as her love was something very curious,
I must describe it, though but in a stanza:
'Twas timid, yet devoted; meek, yet furious;
Extravagant, yet not extravaganza;
Trusting, yet jealous; modest, yet luxurious;
Incalculably fit for the Romancer,
And yet 't had been in no respect a libel
On any Virgin in the Holy Bible!

XLVI.

She lov'd him as the image of her God,—
And would have worship'd had 't not been profane;
She lov'd the very ground whereon he trod,
Yet wept to see his footsteps leave a stain;
As parent loves her child who needs the rod,
The more perchance because he gives her pain;
She fear'd to trust, yet oh! could naught refuse;
She long'd to censure, but could not accuse!

XLVII.

He too loved her; but it was reverence
For one he thought too pure for mortal state;
And, when he sued, 'twas with such deference,
As if he knew himself a reprobate,
And almost fear'd to win a preference,
Lest his devotion should contaminate:
He had not told his love; but his quick eye
Would make Aurora blush unconsciously.

XLVIII.

Juan was pond'ring on the gloomy past,
Dejected by a raging storm without,
When suddenly he saw the furious blast
Tear up a healthy tree;—he then was stout,
But might not he himself be thus o'ercast—
And who would pity him? he look'd about,
But knew no single being whom his lot,
Or good or bad, should interest a jot.

XLIX.

He thought he'd surely that about him which
Would make, at any rate, the tender sex
Compassionate him: true, he was not rich;
But that's a failing which need never vex
Such as have *figures*, likelier to bewitch
The heart, than those which grace a banker's checks;
For tender misses, though they love to dash,
Are too romantic far to think of "cash."

L.

He recollected too, with rising pride,
The proud Sultana,[11] who became the owner
Of his good looks by purchase, but who sigh'd,
More like his slave, when he had dared postpone her;
The Empress[12] too who had his worth espied,—
And all the little favours he had done her,
So richly paid for!—'Faith! her amorous hours,
As Jove's and Danae's, were golden show'rs!

LI.

And now he thought upon the many whom
His charms had captivated in his day;
With sorrow too he call'd to mind the doom
Of lovely Julia,[13]—a dull convent's prey!—
And black-ey'd Haidee[14] in her early tomb!—
But he was not much given to give way,
And straight he laugh'd at his seraglio fun,
And Dudù's[15] bee by which her lips were stung!

LII.

In fact, he'd no good reason to despair:
He'd triumph'd both in regions cold and hot,
And why not triumph too with British Fair?
But let him heed; "Old England" is a spot
Where married Julias not so easy are,
And where we might explore grot after grot
Nor find a black-ey'd Haidee, either saving
Young shipwreck'd Juans, or, if so, worth having.

LIII.

'Tmay be, like Catherine, there are a few;
But sure 'tis base enough to let a Queen
Buy up one's love,—and every ill beshrew [mean!
Hearts that would sell themselves to things more
Faith! English loves are dang'rous to pursue;
Unless you think of marriage,—then all's clean!
"*Marry!* why not? I've tried a roving life;—
'Tis here the fashion,—let me try a wife."

LIV.

At this resolve, a waking sunbeam clear'd
Aside the clouds and, smiling on the storm,
As instantly the face of nature cheer'd :
At the same moment, with still greater charm
To his desponding fancy, there appear'd
Close at his side Aurora's sunnier form !
She saw him ; but, before she could retreat,
He seiz'd her hand and led her to a seat.

LV.

" He knelt a suppliant lover at her feet,"
Would rhyme as well,—but I adhere to fact ;—
'Twould be a more poetical conceit,
Yet 't has been lately so completely hack'd,
And kneeling lovers we so often meet,
They've worn themselves quite threadbare by the
So Juan shall discover his affection [act
Without, in novel fashion, genuflexion.

LVI.

" Presumptuous, worthless creature that I am,
Oh ! pardon me, Aurora, that I dare
Compassion—kindness—ev'n affection claim
From one so fairly pure, so purely fair;
But 'tis my very utterness of shame
Which gives me courage, even in despair,—
As reckless sinners, by distress are driven
To seek protection at the shrine of Heaven !

LVII.

"If I remember rightly we are told—
Somewhere in holy writ,—that Heaven hath
A greater satisfaction to behold
One penitent, who'd left the righteous path,
Return converted to the Christian fold,
Than hosts of true observers of their faith;
And wilt not thou take charitable pride
In leading one whom God has fail'd to guide?

LVIII.

"And I, alas! have so long ceas'd to tread
In virtue's footsteps, that I've lost the track
Conducting to eternal bliss, and need
A Being, differing, more than white and black,
From the corrupted thing I am, to lead
My long estrang'd and darken'd spirit back:—
And oh! to one so beautiful as thou
The fallen Lucifer himself must bow!

LIX.

"Ah, put no faith in those that never fail
In pray'r methodical or rule of act;
Staid knaves! who can their evil passions veil,—
Or are too worthless even to attract
The tempting eye of evil to assail;—
While their desires, if but once attack'd,
Would not be dainty but, like cormorants,
O'ergorge nor satisfy their novel wants!

LX.

" I, who the sparkling cup of sin have quaff'd
Ev'n to its very dregs, and found them bitter,—
I, who have cloy'd upon the dang'rous draught
And only recollect its sting, am fitter,
Than one ne'er vanquish'd by Temptation's craft,
To know that 'all things are not gold which glitter'—
How thornier are the flow'ry ways of vice
Than those of virtue, though they more entice!

LXI.

" Who knows the comfort of a peaceful life—
Who knows the value of a happy home
So well as he who's pass'd his days in strife,
Or been compell'd in foreign climes to roam?
Many there are, from habit, who've become
The thoughtless bigots of a taught belief;
But he who, from conviction, bends his knee,
He only is the real devotee!

LXII.

" Aurora, dare I hope that thou wilt bless
My worthlessness, with pity—with protection—
Oh! if thou hesitatest, nothing less
Could tolerate my boldness, than affection!—
Still silent?—let thy silence then confess
That I, though faulty, *am* thy heart's election!—
I am! I am! and let this trembling kiss
Attest my love, and ratify my bliss!"

LXIII.

Aurora heard him, yet seem'd not to hear;
His words beat on her heart with such vibration
Of all its chords, as quite suspended there
All other feeling—stopp'd her blood's pulsation,
Blanch'd her fair cheek—and caus'd her to appear
A list'ning form bereft of animation,—
Like some rare piece of statuary which lives
Engross'd on the one sense the Sculptor gives!

LXIV.

This declaration, for a son of Spain,
(To those who've heard of that luxurious clime,
Whose melting air and black-ey'd daughters train,
Ev'n from its infancy, the heart to climb
The various degrees of love, and gain
Its very summit) may not seem sublime;
But, p'rhaps, their wonder will directly vanish
When they reflect he did n't speak in Spanish.

LXV.

He neither spoke in English, nor in German,
Which have their beauties to a native tongue,
Although, may be, they better suit a sermon,
Than love confessions, when accented wrong;
Nor spoke he in Italian,—I determine
'Cause he knew not "the language of sweet song;"
In fine, he told his love in French,—forsooth
A language fit for anything but truth!

LXVI.

But—whether his deliv'ry was emphatic,
Or that his eyes talk'd Spanish, I can't tell,—
Or that his subject was not mathematic,
And therefore not incomprehensible,—
His auditor, at least, was not phlegmatic,
And never heard a language sound so well;
Besides he 's in a northern tongue translated,
And possibly thereby infrigidated.

LXVII.

There's one remark I may as well make here;
'Tis never natural, when we English vow,
To use the second person singular:
But rather to—I know not why or how,—
Make single persons "two or more" appear;
French lovers do, however, *thee* and *thou*,
And we may translate strictly, if we please;
Aurora too spoke French with *thous* and *thees*.

LXVIII.

Juan had ceas'd, and there ensu'd a pause
Of moments that seem'd lengthen'd into years
To him whose young enthusiasm now was
Each instant humbled by a thousand fears:
A skilful actor pauses with applause,
In painful scenes, and multiplies his tears;
Aurora paused;—I do not say that she did
To gain effect,—but, if so, she succeeded.

LXIX.

She let him press her to his beating bosom,
Which eloquently throbb'd, as spoke his tongue;
She felt his kisses, and did not refuse 'em;
His arms were round her, and she rather clung
Firmer to their embrace, than strove to loose 'em;
Nor did she speak until a sigh was wrung
From her by mental strife.—But, if I let her
Own words describe her feelings, 't will be better.

LXX.

'Twas not till Juan often had besought
Her to confirm his hopes or his despair,
That she found utterance for what she thought;
And, then, she sigh'd and check'd a starting tear,
And strove to show a nonchalance, which naught
Conceal'd the anguish of her inward care;
Nor was her pain disguis'd by what she utter'd,
More so than bread is when 'tis slightly butter'd.

LXXI.

" Juan, dear Juan, I can never be [sincere—
More than thy friend—though friend the most
Thy sister, whose best prayer shall be for thee!—
Thy joy her bliss—thy pain her only fear!
Oh! would our sentiments could more agree,—
But even then thou couldst not be more dear!"
Here Juan snatch'd her to his heart and kiss'd her,
But not at all as if she'd been his sister.

LXXII.

" Juan, I will confess, I once did dream
Of being happy in becoming thine ;—
Nay, my worst fear was, lest I might not seem
Worthy of one I almost held divine :
But, when I knew thee better, my esteem
Decreas'd,—although my *love* could not decline !
Whisp'rings I heard of many a sinful deed
The fame of which thy own vain lips had spread !

LXXIII.

" I do not call thee vicious ; but the first
Of vices is that utter thoughtlessness
With which man gratifies his evil thirst,
Without once thinking that he *may* distress,—
With which he perpetrates the very worst
Of cruelties—and still is pitiless !
But can man's memory revert delighted
To ought that he has thus destroy'd or blighted ?

LXXIV.

" I'll not believe it ; Heaven would not place
A heart so black within so fair a form,
And thus the image of a serpent grace
With every beauty to dispel alarm,
Ev'n while he stings ! a morn of sunny peace
Too often ushers in a noon of storm ;
But still the storm does not, while it destroys,
Wear a bright look and promise future joys !

LXXV.

" Yet have I fancied that I saw in thee
A cruel recklessness of consequence;[16]
So that the moment brought its transient glee
It matter'd not at what—at whose expense;
And, though thy youth from crimes has not been free,
A constant smile of vague indifference,
Alike to past and future, lights thy brow,—
While even innocence looks mournful now!

LXXVI.

" I've heard thee mingle in the noisy laugh
Of worldlings whose sole wit is ridicule
Even of him whose treach'rous wine they quaff!
Poor slaves of that degenerating rule
Of education, which withdraws the staff
Of reason, and leaves man a worse than fool
To blunder, as he may,—so that with THE
Great dogma he implicitly agree!

LXXVII.

" Oh how I've lov'd! how anxiously I've strove
(For 'tis not easy unobserv'd) to watch
Thy every look—to see thy features move
In every change,—if possible to catch
A stray expression I might proudly love:
Never would drowning wretch more gladly snatch
At floating spar, than I one look would prize
Of thine, which I might love and not despise!

LXXVIII.

" But no, alas! I could not even find
A feeling which affection might reclaim;
And I am forc'd to turn from thee resign'd
To die a victim to a hopeless flame,—
Which preys upon my heart, but which my mind
Could never cherish, without fear of shame!
Oh! that the sacrifice of life could buy
Redemption for thee,—gladly would I die!—

LXXIX.

" Say not that I might, by my counsel, win
Thee from the ways of evil;—true I *might*,
While yet my efforts were not " *discipline*"
But, from their very nov'lty, should delight:—
Still I might *not*, and, oh! 'twere double sin—
Remember that, dear Juan—should thou plight
To me thy troth, unconstancy would be
To others cruel—cruel too, to me!

LXXX.

" Yet I *could* pardon thee,—but would so Heaven?
Now thou can'st make the pitiful excuse
Of being left alone,—uncounsell'd,—driven,
By the world's forms, to bring into abuse
Its every law; but could'st thou be forgiven,
Should thou permit temptation to seduce
Thee still, when vows most sacred shall secure
To me alone thy faith, intact and pure?

LXXXI.

" Yes, Juan, marriage is a fearful tie
Of ceaseless love and never failing faith,
Which only ends—when thou or I shall die !—
A solemn sacrament which only death
Absolves thee from,—or else adultery,
A crime which God's own word prohibiteth !
Life's very long, and but the good should take
An oath we are so liable to break !

LXXXII.

" Myself, I wish that Heaven would allow
Some other bond whose penalty were less,
Or else would so our mortal state endow
That we could never change and ne'er transgress !
Many, too trusting in the marriage vow,
Strive not to keep the love, which *can't* digress,
Neglecting till they lose it ;—those too sure
Of being safe are worse than insecure !

LXXXIII.

" And, after all, love 's not the slave of will ;
Neither a thing *of course*, because 'tis sworn ;
But must be won, and, when obtain'd, must still
Be won, as something that may yet be torn
From our possession, if attended ill ;---
By rust of negligence is armour worn
More than by usage, and, once cease to cherish
Its shining light, the brightest flame will perish !

LXXXIV.

"Yet I *might* counsel thee:---how more than gladly
Would I devote my every thought to make
Thee happy and contented!---still how madly
I shall behold thee, should I fail, forsake
My fond and anxious care!---and *then* how sadly
Would my lone heart endure, until 'tshould break!
But,---selfish fears! there *is* a hope to serve
The being I adore, and shall I swerve?"

LXXXV.

In silence Juan had been gazing at her,
His arm around her waist, which she allow'd;
May be, he thought her speech contain'd much
For he, poor fool! had openly avow'd [matter;
That woman's talk is something more than clatter,
Which many think it, 'cause 'tis sometimes loud
And giddy p'rhaps.---God knows in more than one
sense [nonsense!
Man's learned tongue can sometimes too speak

LXXXVI.

Myself, I'm one of those who can prefer
A good staid sermon, and not fall asleep:
But such, as like a something livelier,---
Playful and witty, on occasions deep,
Though rarely mathematical,---will err
Perchance, but not hold woman's tongue so cheap:
And I once did, when less "experienc'd," seek
To hear a very pretty woman speak.

LXXXVII.

I once heard Tom---(But I must screen his nomen
From obloquy)---define the difference
Between the colloquy of man and woman;
His was but art's,---her's nature's eloquence;
His was a garden rang'd with great acumen,
Precision, study, labour and expense,---
Her's was a spot, no "garden," where one sees
The selfsame flowers, and walks more at ease!

LXXXVIII.

But I may wrong my hero, for, indeed,
Aurora's talk was very unconnected;--- [agreed
Replete with "*yets*" and "*buts;*"---now she
To Juan's suit,---and now it was rejected,---
And now, again, she would agree,---then she'd
Retract! thus Juan, 'tmay be, but reflected
'Twere best to let her tire her patience out,
And catch her then, as anglers do a trout.

LXXXIX.

Yet there was something in her indecision
Peculiarly sweet to Juan's ear;
For, all her hesitation was admission
That he was---what he pray'd for---very dear:
In fact it was throughout the mere collision
Of strong affection and religious fear
And worldly prejudices, which were still
Employ'd to shelter him she loved from ill.

XC.

Such doubts were but such vapours as the sun,
By its own heat, extracts to overshade
Itself awhile, though mingled p'rhaps with one
Or two dark phantoms, which mankind have made
Themselves to bother, and to overrun
The sway of reason, yet which only aid,
By opposition, rather than obscure,
The brilliancy of nature, when *'tis* pure.

XCI.

Juan could only kiss the lovely lips
That said so much they meant him not to credit;
And he began to think "*our partnership's*
*Concluded;*" but before Aurora said it
The lady Adeline in silence slips
Into their company and so delay'd it.
Her ladyship retir'd, but passing near
Whisper'd " Fitz-Fulke" into Aurora's ear.

XCII.

There was a something bitter in the tone,
Which Ad'line threw into the duchess' name,
Which ask'd Aurora whether she would own
A portion of her noble grace's fame,
That she thus dared to trust herself alone
With the licentious author of her shame ?
Aurora felt it so; she could not speak,
But the bright blood forsook her blushing cheek.

XCIII.

Ad'line retreated with a smiling face
And merry step; but, when beyond the room,
Her foot was slacken'd to a graver pace
And her bright look was chang'd for one of gloom:
Did she so change with thought of her sad grace?
Or of Aurora—or of what—of whom?
Alas, the honour of the female race! [grace!
She thought them sham'd—yet envied their dis-

XCIV.

From Juan's arm, by which she was embrac'd,
Abruptly, rudely, did Aurora break
And turn to follow Adeline in haste;
But Juan was not slow to overtake,
And place his arm again around her waist,---
Begging a reason why she should forsake
Him thus—while yet upon her lips his kiss
Was scarcely cold—uncertain of his bliss?

XCV.

'Tis not so easy for a virgin tongue
To argue with a man about his *crim.*
*Cons.*, and yet manage to say nothing wrong,---
Not ev'n a word that could encourage him
To rank her with the shameless, or among
Those worse than shameless, the reserv'd and prim;
And yet Aurora did so in a style
That had not made the most abandon'd smile.

XCVI.

Alas! I cannot upon paper put
Those matchless graces of the eye and tone,---
The one half trembling, and the eye half shut
To hide a tear; and as her words alone
Might not appear so very blushing,—but,
Suffice, it was inimitably done;
Delicate, firm, discreet and comprehensive,
She made poor Juan stand on the defensive.

XCVII.

Vainly in answer Juan all his best did
To overthrow the charge, or to evade it;
Both he and she were too much interested,—
Himself to contradict and she to credit:
In vain he strove; the more that he protested
His innocence, the more was she persuaded,
And urged him to confess, the while implying
He aggravated his offence by lying.

XCVIII.

If there is aught which vexes us, 'tis the
Presumption which some people have to know
Our secret actions better far than we [though
Ourselves,—nay ev'n our secret thoughts, (al-
They are not things which every one can see);
Nay some there are who never will allow
Themselves mistaken, using for apology
Their skill in "physiognomy" or "phrenology!"

XCIX.

Meantime the Duchess, who was rather shrewd,
Was anything but what we call "at ease;"
She felt, at any rate, that now she stood
Expos'd to ridicule from those, who seize
All opportunity of being rude,
When they've a subject for their railleries!---
Besides she put no faith in shades, and fear'd
The friar's ghost was more than it appear'd.

C.

She therefore wisely thought that it would look
Far better, at this crisis, to withdraw
From Norman Abbey, and rejoin the duke,
(For whom however she car'd not a straw)
Lest one might fancy that she really took
No interest in a spouse she never saw,—
And only eighteen happy months had pass'd
Since the fond couple saw each other last!

CI.

She made her mind up when she understood
Her Lord had felt a whim to shoot,
And was come down into the neighbourhood;
This she declar'd would most exactly suit
Her strength, which could not bear the lassitude
Of more than twenty minutes on a route;---
And so she'd just step over and embrace
His dear, good, easy, long forgotten, Grace.

CII.

She still was forc'd to look pleas'd with a deal
Of cruel wit, which made her bosom smart,—
And she had learnt to smile, yet mournful feel;
But, when the moment was arriv'd to part
With Juan, not her efforts could conceal
The rankling fierceness of a baffled heart,
And thro' her smiles there glitter'd partly screen'd
The ready malice of a waken'd fiend.

CIII.

It is more difficult than we expect
To stem the currents which most smoothly glide;
The strongest vessels have 'ere now been wreck'd
In rashly struggling with a smiling tide;—
And how it chafes and rages if 't be check'd
With all the virulence of petty pride!
'Twere safer perhaps to brave the stormy ocean
Than the bright torrent with its waveless motion!

CIV.

So bright the eye of the fair duchess blaz'd
With the despite of vanity insulted,
That Juan thought some fallen angel gaz'd,
And started back, as if he'd been assaulted;
At which the lady's lip was still more rais'd
In bitter scorn: now would 't not have resulted
That she had been much fonder and less haughty,
If she, in fact, had made our Juan naughty?

CV.

And 'tmust be own'd her grace was hardly us'd;
To find her love, which half the world would go far
And wide to gain, ungratefully refus'd,
When she to offer it descended so far;
And yet, withal, to know herself accus'd,
Before she'd felt its sweetness, of a faux pas!
Oh! 'twas enough, if any thing could stir it,
To rouse the venom of a seraph's spirit!

CVI.

This little by-play of her grace was seen
Only by two, except that closeless eye
Which scans infinity (Heaven's, of course, I mean);
And those two were Aurora and not I,
But he who told me of it. Her spleen
Her grace conceal'd by artful raillery;
And, going out, she took---who would imagine it?---
The arm of Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet![17]

CVII.

Aurora notic'd the revengeful eye
With which the Duchess had her Don regarded:
She felt that woman never could defy
The man she loved unless she'd been discarded,
And thus concluded Juan had been shy
And *had* withstood, if ever Spaniard did,
The artful efforts of a fair allurer,---
Which consequently made him all the purer!

CVIII.

True, she was rather quick in this conclusion;
In one she lov'd too happy to discover
A quality, in which so very few shone
Conspicuous, and so useful in a lover,---
Bright chastity!---a thing which, reader, you shun
Of course, as a mere weakness long got over;
But still the pretext though extravagant, did
To reconcile herself to what she wanted.

CIX.

And now she was impatient to atone
For her suspicions,---at a sacrifice
Of blushes, to fall on his neck, and own
That she had wrong'd him by her prejudice:
Eager she watch'd till he should be alone,
That she might give unask'd a trembling kiss:
And this she thought an act of merest duty;---
'Tis well some duties so exactly suit ye!

CX.

Juan was musing, cursing, and complaining;
Comparing mortal hopes to waves of gall
Which, rising, falling, changing, ne'er remaining
Toss the poor heart, as ocean's waves a yawl
Buoy up, and yet somehow without sustaining---
Pass from beneath, and still not let it fall---
Unsettling, buffeting,---oft hurry'ng it
Against some hidden rock, where it must split!

CXI.

Cursing by turns the world that suffers evil
To go at large in woman's lovely shape,
Tempting the souls of mortals for the Devil
With looks of love ev'n saints could not escape!
Complaining that Religion is uncivil,
To say the least, to those who're in the scrape,
For ord'ring them in this world to be vex'd
For the same fault which damns them in the next!

CXII.

Then vowing that it ne'er could be unjust
For man to do what *Providence* must please;
Besides there were some crimes which mankind
Commit, or live no longer at their ease;--- [must
He felt quite sure, if they were well discuss'd
Many such strange anomalies would cease;---
And then 'twould save the Priests so much good time
Lectures and Sermons, if they quash'd the crime.

CXIII.

Indeed he thought the moral code demanded
Thorough reform; and, since the church was under
Consideration, would it not be candid
To own a portion of its moral thunder
Was somewhat useless, since, if ever man did
Half it requir'd, he would be thought a wonder?
He ask'd but this;---why were his passions given,
If to indulge them so offended Heaven?

CXIV.

Why was his bosom made so very prone
To feel the beauties of dear womankind---
Which was the only sin that he could own?
If it was sinful, why was he not blind,---
For loving and beholding were all one?
And, if he afterwards *did* change his mind,
It was his nature, which Heaven sure intended;---
Besides he only did what nine of ten did.

CXV.

But, what annoy'd him most, was to reflect
That all these dogmas sway'd Aurora's breast;
So that her fondness wish'd more to correct
His many failings than to make him bless'd.
And why should *she* to his past loves object---
Since she herself had ne'er his heart possess'd,
Unless his constancy had been defective?
Sure jealousy is never retrospective!

CXVI.

Now, all this argument was most heretical!
And well it was his musings were not heard;
Or else, perchance, some pious Theoretical
A blasphemous indictment had preferr'd; [call
Not that I think he quite blasphem'd, and yet I
His reasoning, if not damnable, absurd:---
Pity that heroes, in an epic poem, [know 'em!
Must have some faults that all their friends may

CXVII.

Fortune is fickle, and is surely blind;
For, if not blind, she 's very inconsistent,—
So harshly cruel, so unjustly kind!
Yet, like a prize fighter, whose learned fist a'n't
Directed ever with a hostile mind!
Naught from the hopes of Juan was so distant,
When, round his neck, two virgin arms were flung,
And to his own two chaste lips trembling clung.

CXVIII.

How sweet how thrilling is the maiden kiss
Of mutual and confiding love, when both
First find the object of each other's bliss
Themselves!—what need of any other oath,
More sacred or imperious than this
Indubitable evidence of troth?
Oh, Love's first kiss!—how well do I remember
My own;—it warm'd me even in December!

CXIX.

Oh! that first kiss!—I want a simile;
What *is* it like?—a hero's first essay
In doubtful warfare grac'd with victory?—
That's single joy; the first successful lay
Which crowns a poet's dream?—that's vanity
And single too; the blessings that repay
A patriot's triumph in his country's cause?—
Yet that were only "merited applause."

CXX.

Let's see; two doubtful hopes of bliss that meet
In one point of reality: the two
Walls of an arch are weak and incomplete,
Approaching tow'rds each other, tott'ring through
Their very inclination,—till concrete,
When their great power no weight can subdue:—
Like the key stone which gives an archway strength
Is love's first kiss;—a simile at length!

CXXI.

I've heard it liken'd to the seasoning that
Gives flavour to a glass of sherry negus,
Which is but water spoilt and wine made flat
(Ingredients which most certainly fatigue us)
Until 'tis sweeten'd.—But what are we at?
If such our poetry we'd better league us
With those whose understandings are their bellies,
And only argue upon sweets and jellies!

CXXII.

Long did their lips in silence cling together,
Breathing the speechless language of the heart,—
As if they fear'd to sunder, doubtful whether
They could rejoin, if once allow'd to part,—
A conscious dream too blissful for this nether
Existence, which the slightest stir might thwart!
And, when their lips did part, 'twas to repeat
Their joy,—again to part,—again to meet!

CXXIII.

And now at length, exhausted with her bliss,
Aurora lean'd her head on Juan's breast,---
So feeble she could scarcely meet the kiss,
Which every instant he so warmly press'd
Upon her lips, that thought themselves remiss
And strove to overcome their want of rest.
And now their tongues, awaking from their trance,
For some fond vocatives found utterance.

CXXIV.

Short, fond, endearing epithets, succeeded
By an embrace and pause,—while still their eyes
Caress'd each other, and spoke all they needed ;—
And thus they 'd gaze, oft murmuring broken sighs
Of swelling love, until their looks receded,
Dazzled by what they seem'd to idolize !
And then, like springs, restrain'd apart in vain,
With sudden force, their lips would join again !

CXXV.

But I've forgot to say, that, during this
Embracing business, Aurora's cheek
Was of a crimson hue, which colour is
Some evidence she came herself to seek
In love, not shamelessness, her Juan's kiss ;---
Although, alas ! (for human nature 's weak)
She blush'd from habit, and she could, no doubt,
Had blushes hinder'd her, have done without !

CXXVI.

Yet many readers will conceive, I know,
That all this kissing work would end in harm;
For th' amorous Don has proved himself not slow
To feel the influence of Beauty's charm,—
And, though Aurora 's chaste, "the purest snow,"
"The chastest ice" would melt, if once made warm.
But I no more, at present, ask them than to
Condemn not till they've read another canto.

## NOTES.

Note 1, Stanza ii. See Print shops (Ackermann's &c.)
" Where every ruin, cloud, and tree makes known a part
Of shades of Byron and Napoleon Buonaparte."
*Poems by Captain—Somebody or other.*

Note 2, Stanza vii. " Difficile est proprie communia dicere," is the motto which Lord Byron has prefixed to his poem; but it was not reckoned a sufficient apology by a canting world, whose quibbling criticisms occasioned the bitter conclusion of his preface to Cantos vi. vii. and viii. I need not say that I take no part in any of the thousand and one objections to this beautiful production; but, at the same time, I would wish that every Author, who can command an extensive perusal of his works, should avail himself of his enviable power of conveying, without danger of offending, as much instruction as amusement, and should teach his readers the things which ought to be, rather than merely describe those which are,---or certainly never neglect the former while attempting the latter.

Note 3, Stanza x. It may be the height of presumption in me to imagine that any of my readers either should not have read " Don Juan," or, having read, could possibly, in any way, forget whatever a Byron has immortalized; but, nevertheless, I will venture to, just cursorily, remind any such, if any such there be, of the situation of our hero up to the end of Canto xvi. whence immediately I take up the poem. After his unfortunate amours with Donna Julia and black eyed Haidee,---after his ungallant rejection of the Sultana Gulbeyaz,---after having taken parts in Dudù's dream and the siege of Ismail,---and after having been the favourite of the Empress Catherine,---Don Juan has, with his little Turkish protégée, Leila, arrived in England, upon some secret mission from the Court of Russia: he is on a visit at Norman Abbey, the seat of Lord Henry and Lady Adeline Amundeville,---where he has evidently ingratiated himself not only with his lovely hostess herself, but with several of her fair guests,---with one of whom, the Duchess of Fitz-Fulke, the sixteenth canto leaves him in a very awkward situation, he having

just mistaken her for the "Black Friar," the hereditary ghost of the family.

Note 4, Stanza xxii. "The hall" may be considered as rather inappropriate, but it is where Lord Byron makes the scene take place;

"Juan put forth one arm---Eternal Powers!
It touch'd no soul nor body, but the wall,
On which the moonbeams fell in silvery showers
Chequer'd with all the tracery of the hall." *St.* cxx. *C.* xvi.

Note 5, Stanza xxx. See Canto xv. Stanza xlix.

She marvell'd "what he saw in such a baby
As that prim, silent, cold Aurora Raby."

Note 6, Stanza xxx. See Canto xv. Stanza xlvi.

"She was a catholic too, sincere, austere."

Note 7, Stanza xxxi. See ballad of the "Black Friars," *Canto* xvi.

Note 8, Stanza xxxviii. See Canto xv. Stanza xlvi.

"And deemed that fallen worship far more dear
Perhaps because 'twas fallen."

Note 9, Stanza xxxix. The Bible represents Joseph himself as "a goodly person and well favoured," but is quite silent as to Mrs. Captain Potiphar's personal attractions; although common sense would infer that there would have been no great virtue in his resistance, unless she also had been "fair to see." However, as this important question is not conclusively set at rest in as many words, a lady may be excused making the most of its obscurity, especially for the praiseworthy purpose of redeeming the honour of her own sex, upon so tender a point. By the bye, lest the heathen word Adonis should be objectionable, I may as well state that the classical fable of Venus and Adonis

("Who would a hunting go---the naughty boy!
Rather than stay and with a goddess toy")

is considered to be a mere corruption of Joseph and his mistress.

Note 10, Stanza xliii. See Canto xv. Stanza xlv.

"All youth---but with an aspect beyond time;
Radiant and grave---as pitying man's decline:
Mournful---but mournful of another's crime.
She looked as if he sat by Eden's door,
And grieved for those who could return no more."

Note 11, Stanza l. Gulbeyaz. See Canto v.

Note 12, Stanza l. Catherine of Russia. See Cantos ix. and x.

Note 13, Stanza li. Donna Julia. See Canto i.

Note 14, Stanza li. Haidee. See Cantos ii. iii. and iv.

Note 15, Stanza li. Dudù. See Canto vi.

Note 16, Stanza lxxv. "An utter recklessness of consequence." Truly a very philosophical line for a young lady; and, indeed her whole discourse is very sententious and sermonlike, although, perhaps, the woman cannot quite disguise herelf. In fact Byron has made her a very difficult character, which only his own genius could have done justice to.

"Her spirit seem'd as seated on a throne
Apart from the surrounding world, and strong
In its own strength---most strange in one so young." *C.* xv.

Note 17, Stanza cvi. See Canto xiv. Stanza xlvii.

"Her late performance had been a dead set
At Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet."

C. Whittingham, Tooks Court, Chancery Lane.

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*** MISS L. SHERIDAN (Editor of the "*Comic Offering*), has promised her valuable assistance for the September number, which will complete VOLUME I.

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